Choosing the right hobby group for our children

Parents are often keen to arrange out of school activities for their loved ones once they enter the kindergarten stage, some even earlier. One of the main purposes of engaging these hobby groups is to kill time, whatever they do, it would be much more educational than watching TV or playing with toys at home. It is common that both parents of a child would have to work during the day, thus leaving too much time for the child of having nothing much to do. So engaging in playgroups, or hobby group to be more precise, seems to be the ideal arrangement in recent years.

The question is: How do we choose the right hobby group(s) for our children and do our children like these hobby groups? When we were children ourselves, hobby groups are indeed a luxury and not heard of, if at all popular. I still remember that I had to make a number of promises before my mum would agree to let me go to a football lesson on Saturdays. Being granted permission by my father to learn a musical instrument at the kindergarten stage seems completely impossible.

Nowadays, it is the parents who are exceptionally keen, sometimes a bit over, to arrange activities for their children, to the extent that, a child is fully occupied every day of the week, and occasionally even more than one activity per day. It is not difficult to understand why this is so. It seems to be getting increasing hard to try to get a place in a first choice primary school and doing so, apart from solid academic school results and outstanding performance at the interview(s), the number of hobby groups with certain degree of achievements seem to play a big part. While some parents are sometimes too keen to ensure that their child has a cutting edge over others, some parents are simply following suit, as they feel that failure to do so would be unable to meet the entry pre-requisites and thus jeopardising their child’s chance of success. I don’t know the percentage of parents choosing the right hobby group according to their children’s wishes. What I do know is that many parents are choosing a particular hobby group purely because they want their children to have an achievement in one of a kind so that the portfolio to be presented together with their primary applications would stand out.
I see that some children have been deprived of the opportunity to learn something they like on the grounds that such things are too common amongst others. Many children are always tired as they have attended too many activities. They are even going to some hobby groups they dislike or have no interest in. They go only their parents want them to. There is no doubt that all parents love their children. I suggest that children can be given a certain degree of freedom in choosing hobby groups with the guidance of their parents. Parents should also strike a balance between academic and leisure hobby groups, as well as leaving sufficient time for them to take a break and do what a child of such age should do. The most important key in these activities is communications between parents and their children. Be patient and talk to your children. Find out what they really want and what they really like. Explain to them those choices which appear to be unsuitable. Don’t give them too much pressure and try and encourage them in what they do. Recognise their achievements, however small they may be. Don’t scare them off hobby groups. Sometimes you have got to let your children be themselves. All parents want their children to go to a good primary school and I am no exception. However, it is equally important to raise them happily and healthily. The children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way.

Writer: Benny Cheng
Giselle Cheng (Lower 3)